

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently Amended) A medical implant system device for immobilizing two structures, said device comprising:

a first bone anchor; ~~for becoming secured with respect to a first structure; and~~  
a second bone anchor; and

~~a brace for coupling the first bone anchor to the second bone anchor, wherein the brace having has a distal end portion which is adapted to be pivotally and slidingly mated with a proximal end portion of at least one of the bone anchors. said first anchor, said pivotal mating occurring before said first anchor is secured with said first structure.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The device system of claim 1 wherein ~~said the~~ distal end of said the brace is adapted for transferring torque and compressive force from ~~said the~~ brace to at least one of the bone anchors. said first anchor.

3. (Currently Amended) The device system of claim 1 wherein ~~said the~~ brace comprises:

~~a proximal end, said the proximal end adapted for locking with a mating receptacle attached to the proximal end of [[a]] the second bone anchor secured in a second structure spaced apart from said first structure, said locking occurring when said the distal end of said the brace pivots with respect to said the proximal end of said the first bone anchor, said the pivoting occurring while said the distal end of said the brace remains pivotally mated with said the proximal end of said the first bone anchor.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The device system of claim 3 wherein ~~said the~~ receptacle allows for polyaxial rotation with respect to ~~said the~~ second bone anchor.

5. (Currently Amended) The device system of claim 3 wherein ~~said the~~ receptacle is a force fit with respect to ~~said the~~ proximal end of ~~said the~~ brace.

6. (Currently Amended) The device system of claim 3 wherein ~~said the~~ receptacle provides positive feedback when ~~said the~~ proximal end of said brace is properly mated with ~~said the~~ receptacle.

7. (Currently Amended) The device system of claim 1 further comprising:  
a hinge attached to a proximal end of said the first bone anchor for facilitating said the  
pivotal mating.

8. (Currently Amended) The device system of claim 7 wherein said the hinge  
allows for polyaxial rotation with respect to said the first bone anchor.

9. (Currently Amended) The device system of claim 1 wherein said the proximal  
end of said the brace is further adapted to accept torque applied thereto.

10. (Currently Amended) The device system of claim 1 wherein said the  
structures are vertebrae and wherein said the bone anchors are screws for placement in the  
pedicle of said the vertebrae.

11-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) ~~A hinge for use with a bone anchor support system, said hinge comprising: The system of claim 7, wherein the hinge comprises:~~  
~~proximal and distal openings in-line from each other forming an in-line passage~~  
~~through said the hinge;~~

said proximal the distal opening comprising a clamp for rotatable attachment to the  
head of a bone anchor;

said the proximal opening adapted to accept the distal end of a brace prior to said the  
bone anchor being secured in a bone, said the hinge further comprising a pivot point for  
capturing an accepted brace so as to allow said the accepted brace to pivot with respect to  
said the hinge but not to become released therefrom; and wherein said the clamp allows said  
the distal end of an accepted brace to become detachable coupled to said the head of an  
attached anchor for the purpose of force transfer between said the brace and said the anchor.

21. (Currently Amended) The hinge of claim 20 wherein the proximal end of said  
the hinge is further adapted to accept a force applying locking structure.

22. (Currently Amended) The hinge of claim 20 wherein said the pivot includes  
at least one pair of bearings positioned on either side of said the in-line passage.

23. (Currently Amended) ~~A brace for use with a bone anchor support system, said brace comprising:~~ The system of claim 1, wherein the brace comprises:

a curved shank portion slightly longer than the distance between the bones to be supported; ~~said the~~ shank comprising:

a first key at its distal end for releasably mating with a head of a first anchor so as to allow torque transfer between ~~said the~~ brace and ~~said the first~~ bone anchor; and

a second key at its proximal end for releasably mating with a receptacle at a second one of ~~said the~~ bone anchors.

24. (Currently Amended) The brace of claim 23 wherein said shank further comprises:

at least one slot longitudinally displaced along ~~said the~~ shank in proximity to ~~said the~~ distal end, ~~said the~~ slot for accepting a fulcrum point affixed to ~~said the~~ first anchor so as to allow ~~said the~~ brace to pivot around ~~said the~~ fulcrum point while still maintaining ~~said the~~ shank in controlled spatial relationship with ~~said the~~ first bone anchor.

25. (Currently Amended) A medical implant device for stabilizing first and second bones, ~~said device~~ comprising:

~~a first bone anchor having an attachment;~~

~~a second bone anchor; and~~

a brace comprising:

a means for pivoting the brace from a first position to a second position,  
wherein in the second position the brace couples the first bone anchor to the second bone anchor;

a means for slidingly adjusting the means for pivoting along the longitudinal length of the brace; and

a means for transmitting torque between the brace and the at least one of the bone anchors.

~~means for capturing a brace within said attachment; and~~

~~means for supporting a captured brace such that said captured brace can either be in line with said anchor to assist in fastening said bone anchor to a bone, or positioned to form an angle with said anchor.~~

26. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 25 wherein ~~said~~ the supporting means comprises:

a pair of bearings displaced on opposite sides of ~~said~~ the captured brace, ~~said~~ the bearings interfacing with ~~said~~ the brace by indentations longitudinally displaced along ~~said~~ the brace.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 26 wherein ~~said~~ the brace comprises:

means for engaging a receptacle attached to [[a]] the second bone anchor spaced apart from ~~said~~ the first bone anchor, ~~said~~ the device further comprising;

means for polyaxially attaching ~~said~~ the receptacle to the head of ~~said~~ the second bone anchor; and wherein ~~said~~ the receptacle comprises means for engaging with ~~said~~ the brace.

30. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 29 wherein ~~said~~ the first and second anchor engagement means comprise:

means for locking ~~said~~ the brace and ~~said~~ the anchors in a fixed relationship with each other.

31-42. (Canceled)